



TOWER DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

CIRCULATION AND STREETScape

MARCH 2023





01

BACKGROUND



BACKGROUND

Historic Context

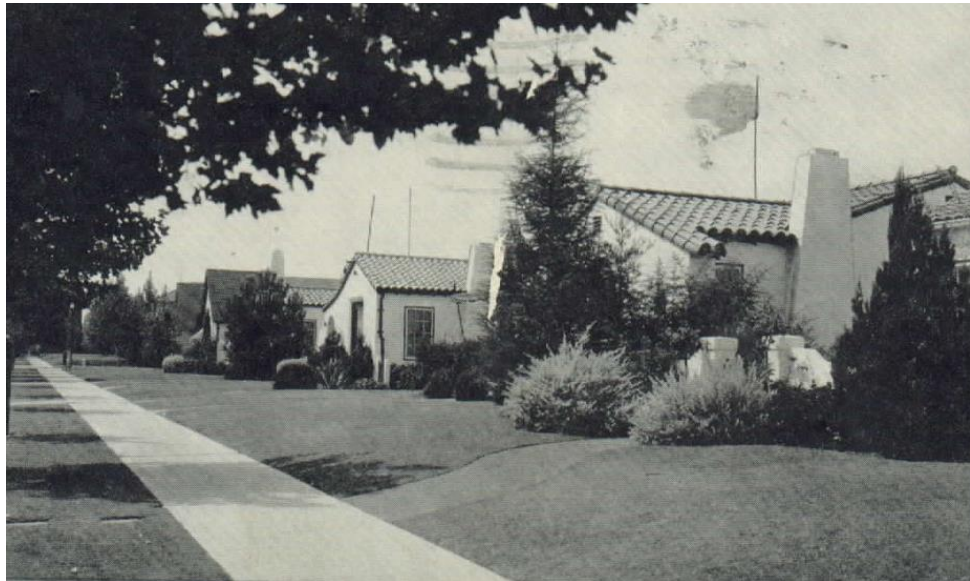
Wishon Avenue Streetcar



Fresno High School



Tower Theater



Van Ness Boulevard



Fresno City College



Olive Avenue Commercial Area

BACKGROUND

Urban Street Grid

- Original development began 1914-1915 within a portion of the College Addition.
- District is comprised of traditional neighborhoods with narrower lanes than their suburban counterparts, which **slows traffic, increases walkability** and creates spatial definition.
- Historic interconnected street grid **disperses traffic and reduces need for large arterials**.
- On-street parking **reduces demand for off-street parking** and provides pedestrians with a physical and psychological **barrier from traffic**.



BACKGROUND

Street Classification (Fresno General Plan)

Freeways and Access Ramps

Grade-separated, multilane, median divided roadways with wide travel lanes (12+ feet) to accommodate high-speed vehicle traffic.

Arterials (*Shields, McKinley, Weber/H, Blackstone*)

Move multiple modes of traffic within and between neighborhoods and to/from Freeways/Expressways. Typically 4 to 6 lanes.

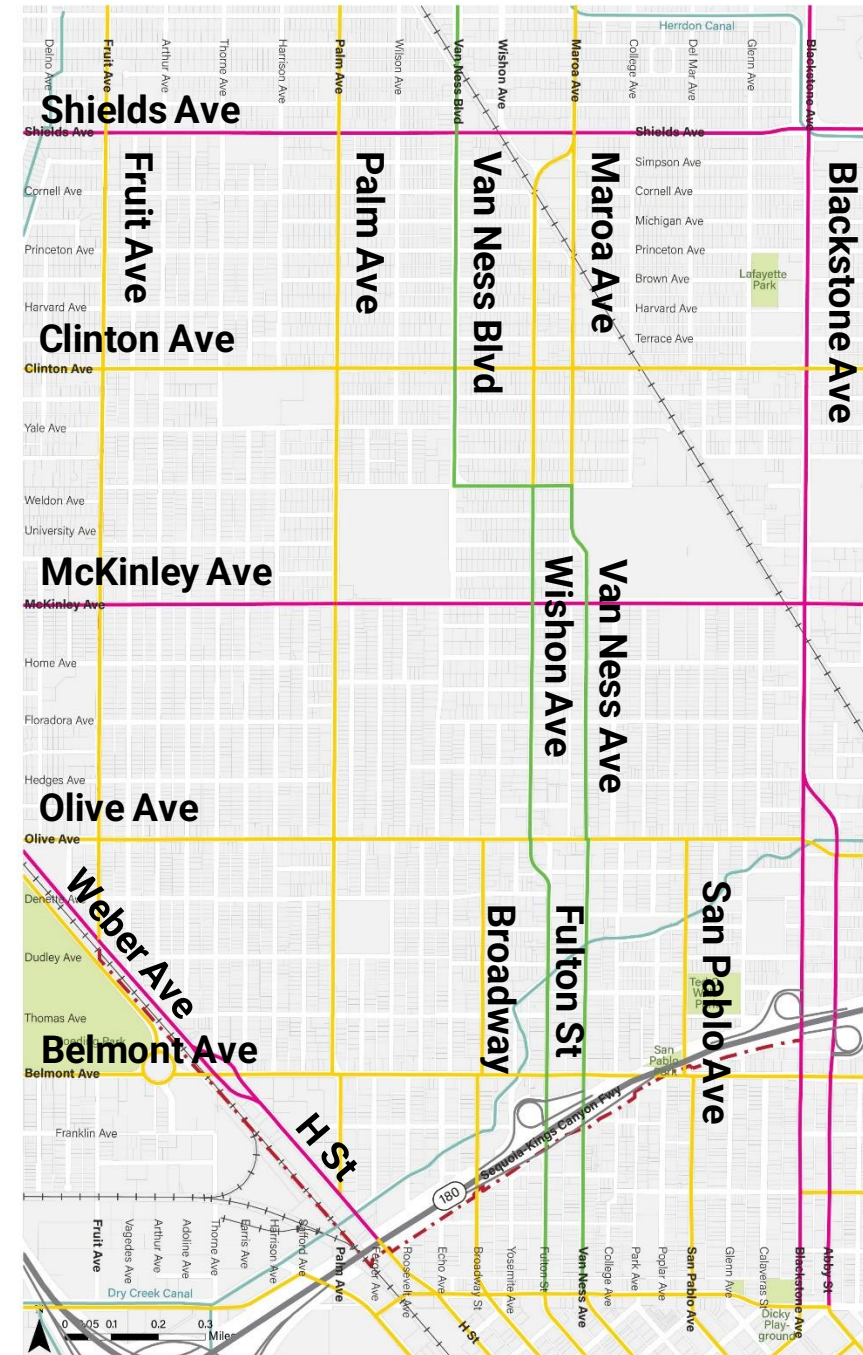
Collectors (*Fruit, Palm, Maroa, Broadway, San Pablo, Clinton, Olive, Belmont*)

Major transportation corridors that connect City neighborhoods. Accommodate transit routes.

Local Streets (*Residential Streets*)

Accommodate all modes of local traffic. Provide direct access to abutting properties. Pedestrians accommodated in sidewalk.

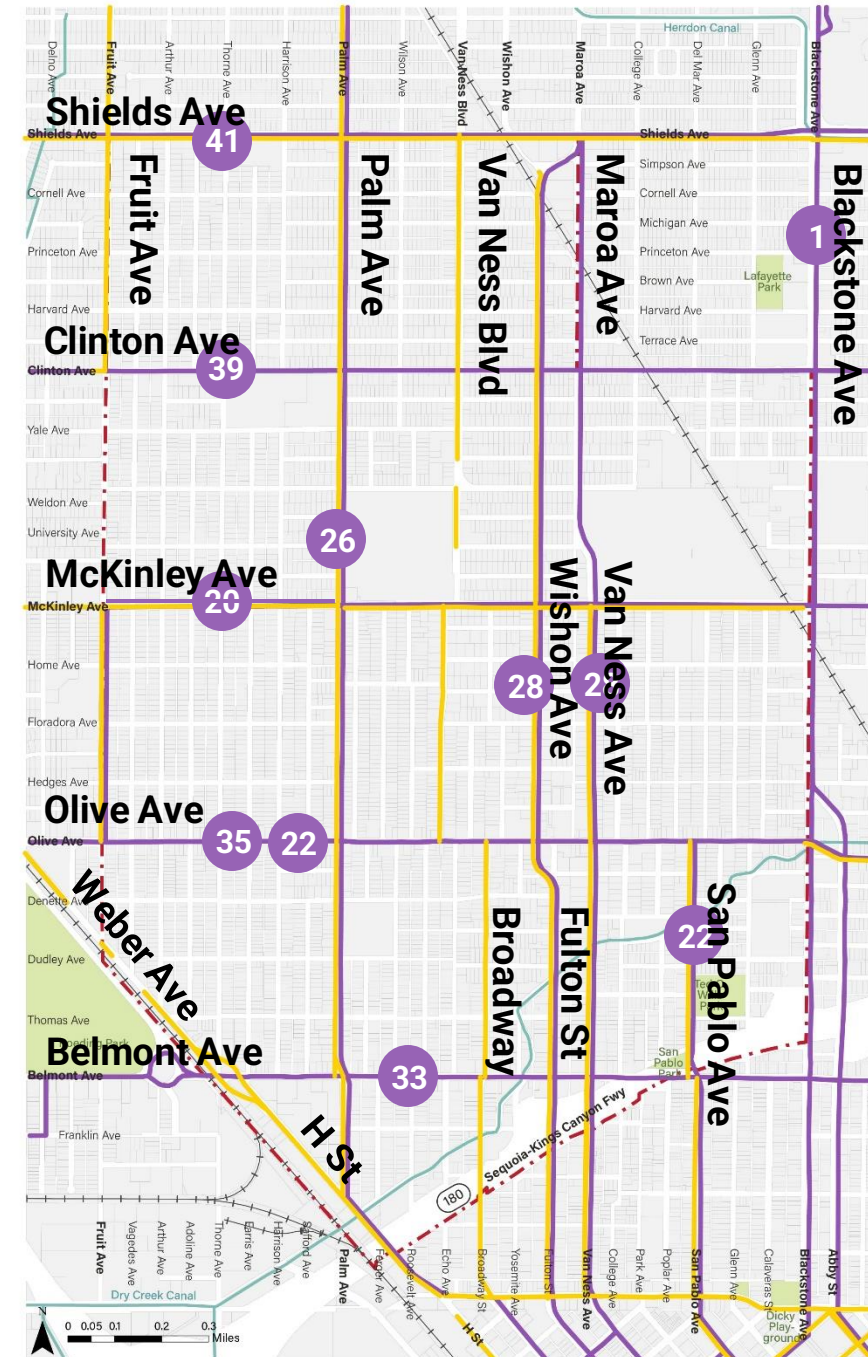
- Freeway
- On/Off Ramps
- Arterial
- Collector
- Scenic Corridors
- Drive



BACKGROUND

Transit + Bike Network

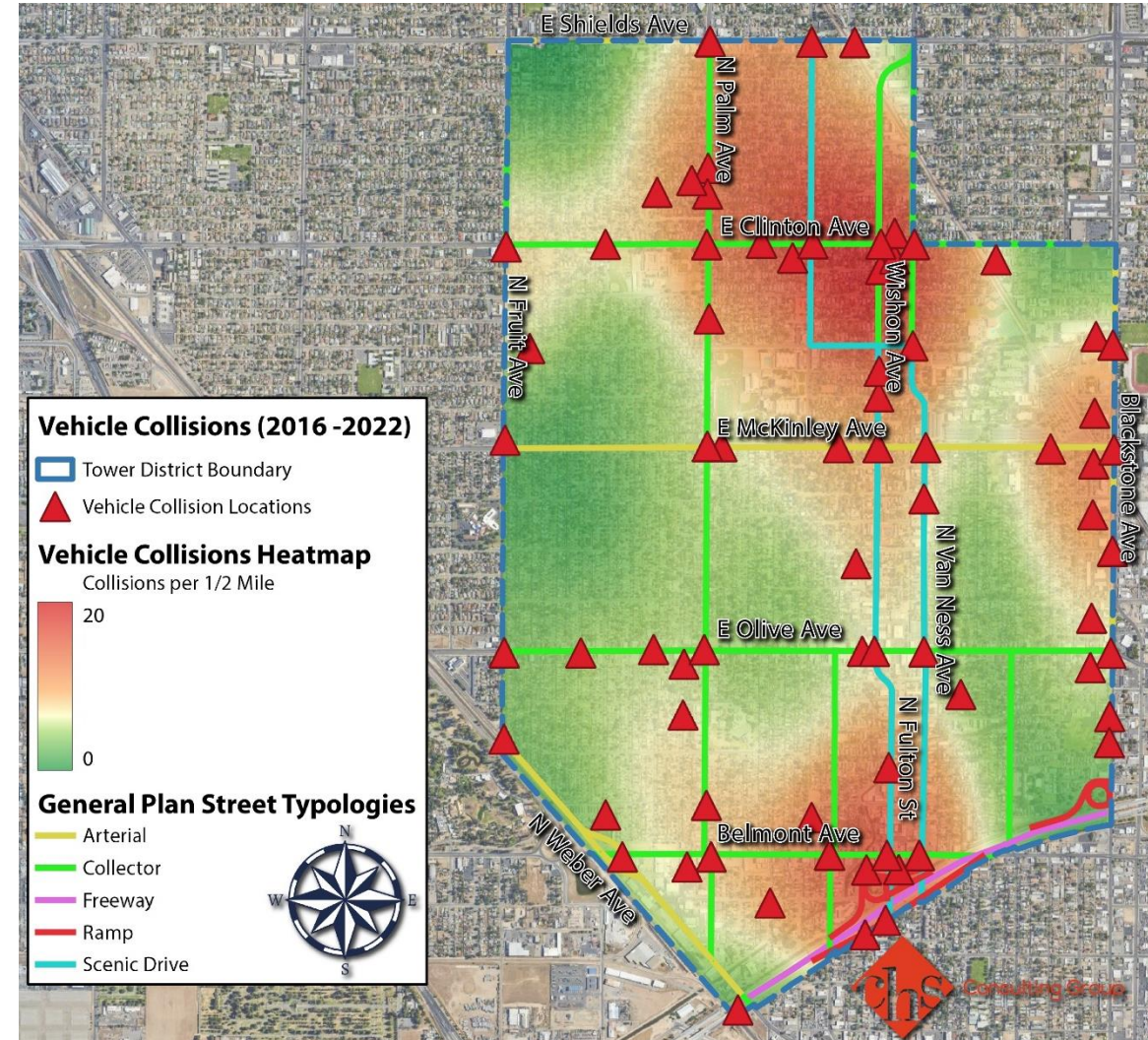
- The existing **transit network** runs along most collector and arterial roads in the Tower District.
- There are missing pedestrian infrastructure to safely access **bus stops** in some locations.
- New **protected bike lanes** have been added to the Tower District along Van Ness, Wishon, Palm, and Belmont.



BACKGROUND

Vehicle vs. Vehicle Collisions (2018-2022)

- 131 Vehicle vs Vehicle Collisions in past 5 years or ~ 26 / year
- Collisions primarily focused along Arterial and Collector Streets with wide travel lanes and higher vehicle speeds.
- Collision Hot Spots:
 - **E Clinton Avenue:** Highest collision rate centered near intersection with Van Ness Avenue (~20 collisions per ½ mile)
 - **Belmont Avenue:** Very high collision rate near intersections with Fulton Street, Van Ness Avenue (i.e., Hwy 180 Access Ramps)
 - **N Palm Avenue:** Moderate-High collision rate between Shields and Clinton Avenues
- 74% of vehicle vs vehicle collisions occurred at intersections.
- Primary collision factors are traffic signals/signs, automobile ROW, and unsafe speed

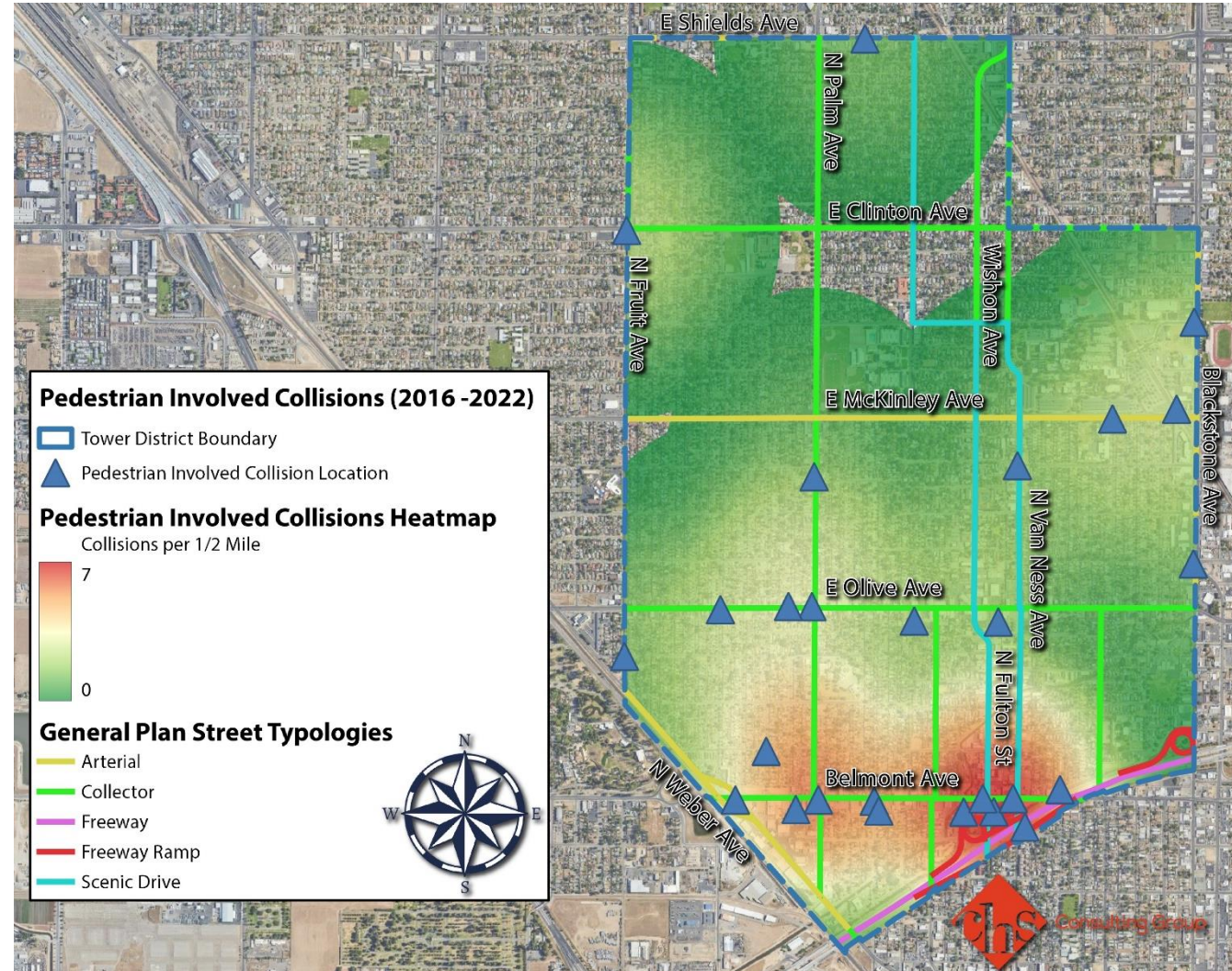


Red areas represent *high-risk* locations. **Green areas** represent *low-risk* locations for people in vehicles in the study area.

BACKGROUND

Pedestrian-Involved Collisions (2018-2022)

- 29 pedestrian involved collisions in past 5 years or ~ 6 / year
- Collision Hot Spots:
 - **Hwy 180 Ramps @ N Fulton Street and N Van Ness Avenue.** Highest rate of collisions: ~7 collisions per ½ mile over past 5 years
 - **Belmont Avenue.** High proportion of collisions with ~5 collisions per ½ mile over the past 5 years near intersection with N Palm Avenue
- Wide travel lanes with limited traffic controls encourage higher vehicle speeds
- Narrow sidewalks, long distances between marked pedestrian crossings, and lack of controlled pedestrian crossings discourage pedestrian travel and result in potentially dangerous conditions for pedestrians.
- Gaps in the sidewalk network

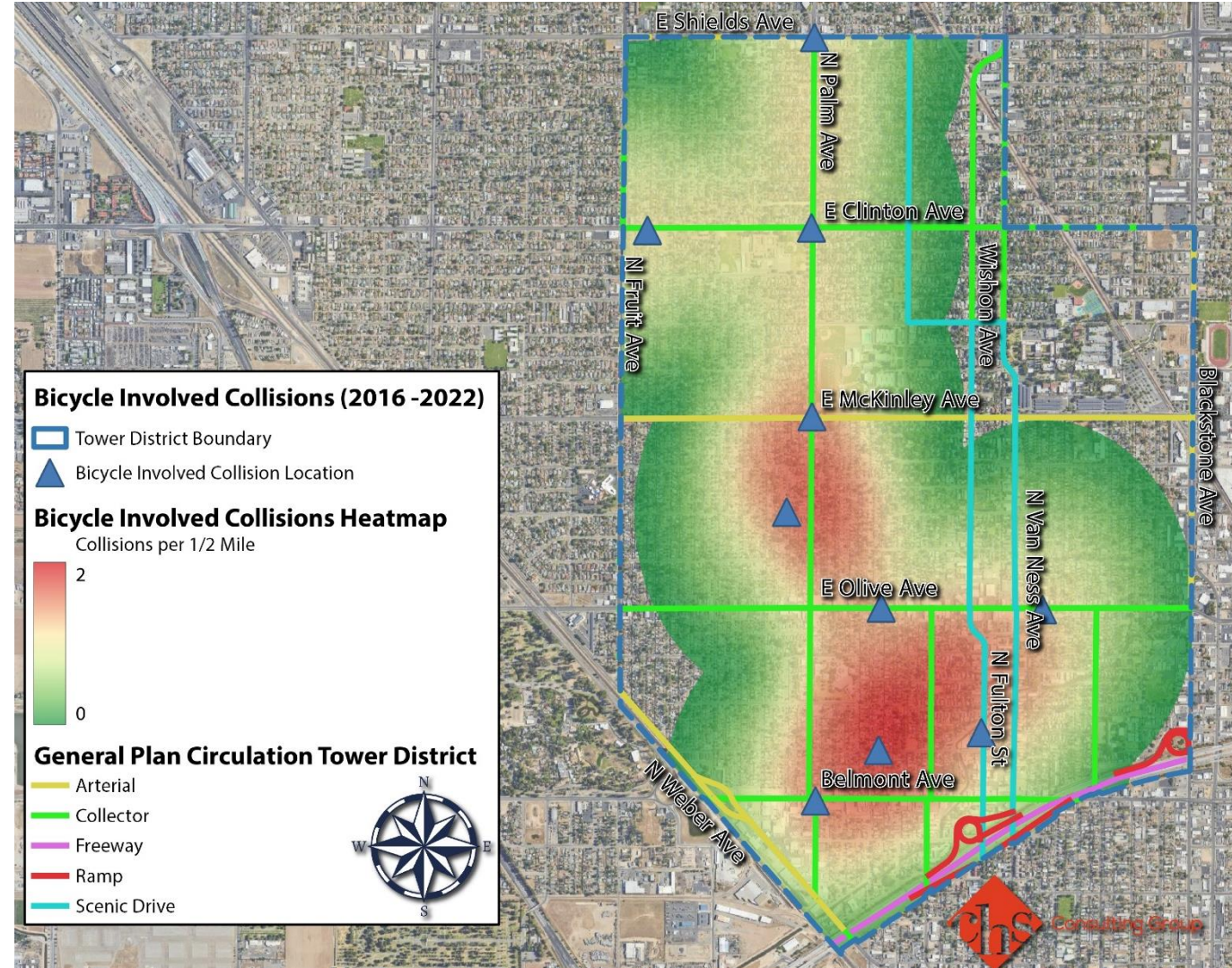


Red areas represent *high-risk* locations. **Green areas** represent *low-risk* locations for pedestrians in the study area.

BACKGROUND

Bicycle-Involved Collisions (2018-2022)

- Ten (10) bicycle involved collisions in past 5 years.
- Collision Hotspots:
 - Highest rate of bicycle involved collisions (~ 2 collisions per ½ mile) generally located in the **southern portion of the Tower District**.
 - Secondary hot spot located along **Palm Avenue**, between McKinley and Olive Avenues.
- Most collisions (80%) occurred on roadways with no bicycle facilities.
- Collector Streets accounted for 70% of Collisions, with 40% of collisions on N. Palm Avenue and 20% on E. Olive Avenue.
- Wide travel lanes prioritize vehicles and encourage higher vehicle speeds.
- Lack of bicycle facilities discourages bicycle travel within and through the District and results in potentially dangerous conditions.



Red areas represent *high-risk* locations. **Green areas** represent *low-risk* locations for people on bikes in the study area.

BACKGROUND

Planned Infrastructure Projects

BNSF Blackstone / McKinley Grade Separation Project

Project will move traffic to an underpass below the BNSF tracks and includes roadway capacity increases and safety improvements.

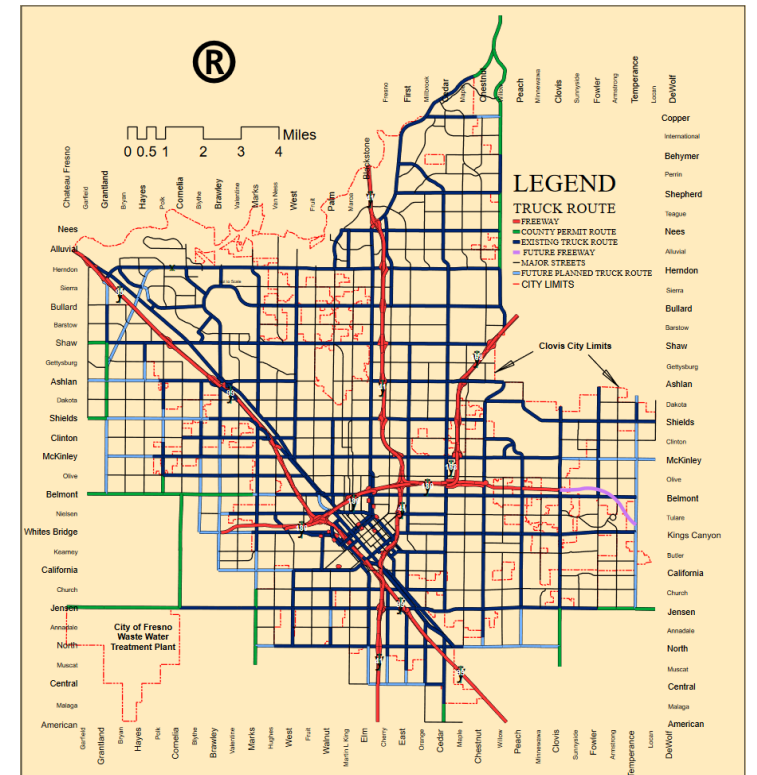


South Central Fresno AB617 Community Truck Reroute Study and related Health Assessment

Study will identify, analyze, and evaluate potential strategies to abate truck impacts (air pollution, noise, polluted runoff, traffic crashes, congestion, active transportation conflicts, residential and school impacts, etc.)

Belmont and Olive Avenue Overcrossings and SR 99 Project

Projects will create new overcrossings of the high-speed rail corridor at Belmont and Olive, rebuild Olive Avenue interchange with SR 99, and close Belmont Avenue interchange.



BACKGROUND

Existing Issues/Deficiencies

Freeways and Access Ramps

- High-speed traffic exiting freeways via ramps continues to travel at high speeds onto Arterial and Collector streets.
- High rate of collisions on Collectors and Arterials at or near freeway access ramps.

Arterials

- Wide travel lanes (11 to 20 feet or more) in excess of community transportation needs.
- Moderate to high rate of collisions primarily resulting from traffic signal and sign violations, right-of-way violations, unsafe speeds.
- Collisions primarily occurred along McKinley and Blackstone avenues with the highest concentration of collisions occurring where the two roadways intersect



SR 180 Access Ramps at Fulton Street / Madison Avenue



Shields Avenue looking east.

BACKGROUND

Existing Issues/Deficiencies

Collectors

- Collector streets have the highest rate of collisions in the Tower District
- Sidewalks are too narrow and provide little to no buffer between the sidewalk and travel lanes.
- Major intersections lack proper pedestrian facilities such as high-visibility crosswalks, ADA-accessible curb ramps, pedestrian push buttons with countdown timers
- Lack of midblock crosswalks require pedestrians to walk long distances, resulting in some pedestrians crossing at unmarked/uncontrolled locations at increased risk.
- Wide travel lanes in excess of community transportation needs.

Local Streets

- Travel lanes are too wide, encouraging unsafe speeds
- Major intersections lack proper pedestrian facilities
- Lack of midblock crosswalks



Clinton Avenue looking west, with Hamilton School on the left.



Floradora Street.



02

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

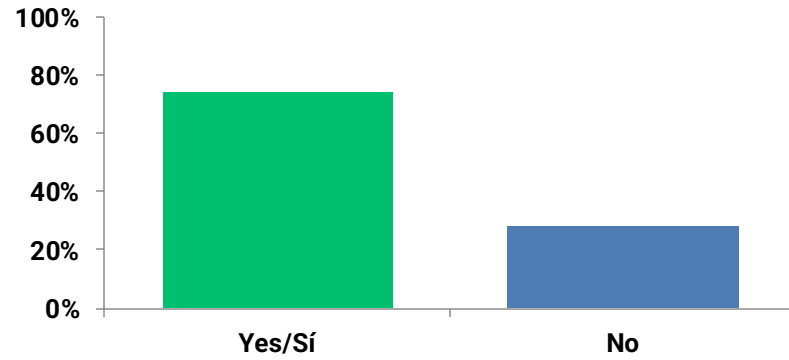


COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Survey

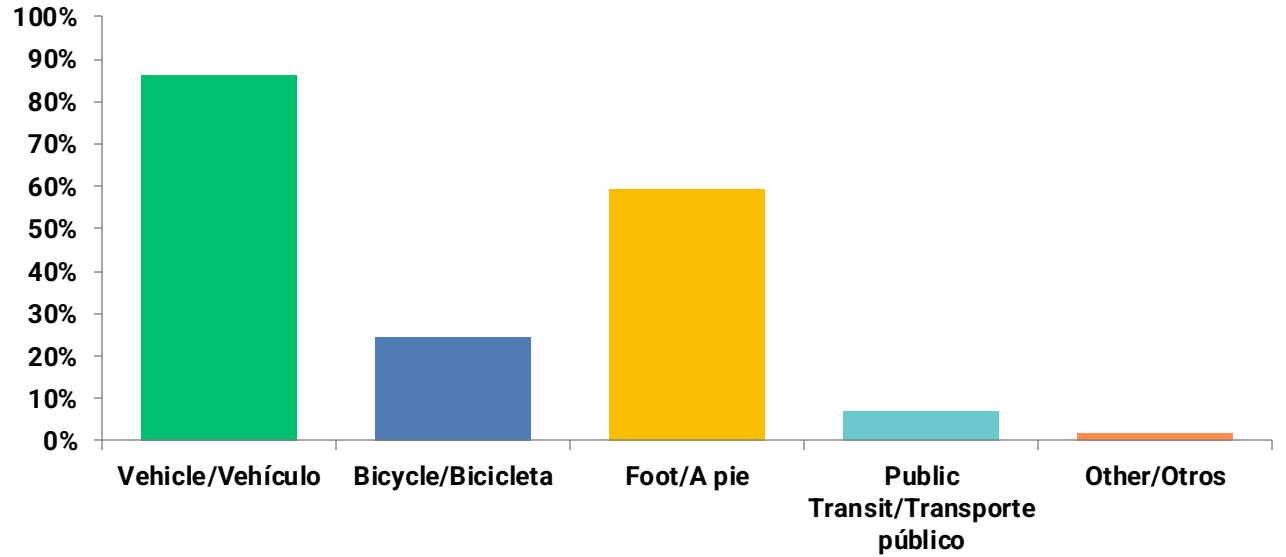
Do you feel safe getting around on foot, and by bike in the Tower District?

Answered: 677



Which modes of transportation do you use most?

Answered: 681



Community Workshop 1

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF STREETS & PUBLIC SPACES?

¿CUÁL ES SU VISIÓN PARA EL FUTURO DE LAS CALLES Y LOS ESPACIOS PÚBLICOS?

Parking Availability for Residents
Better Biking Infrastructure
Access to Green Space
Safe Routes to School
Safe Speeds Through Neighborhood
Fresno Triathlon More Produce, Less Food Trucks at Farmers Market
Easy Street Closure at Olive

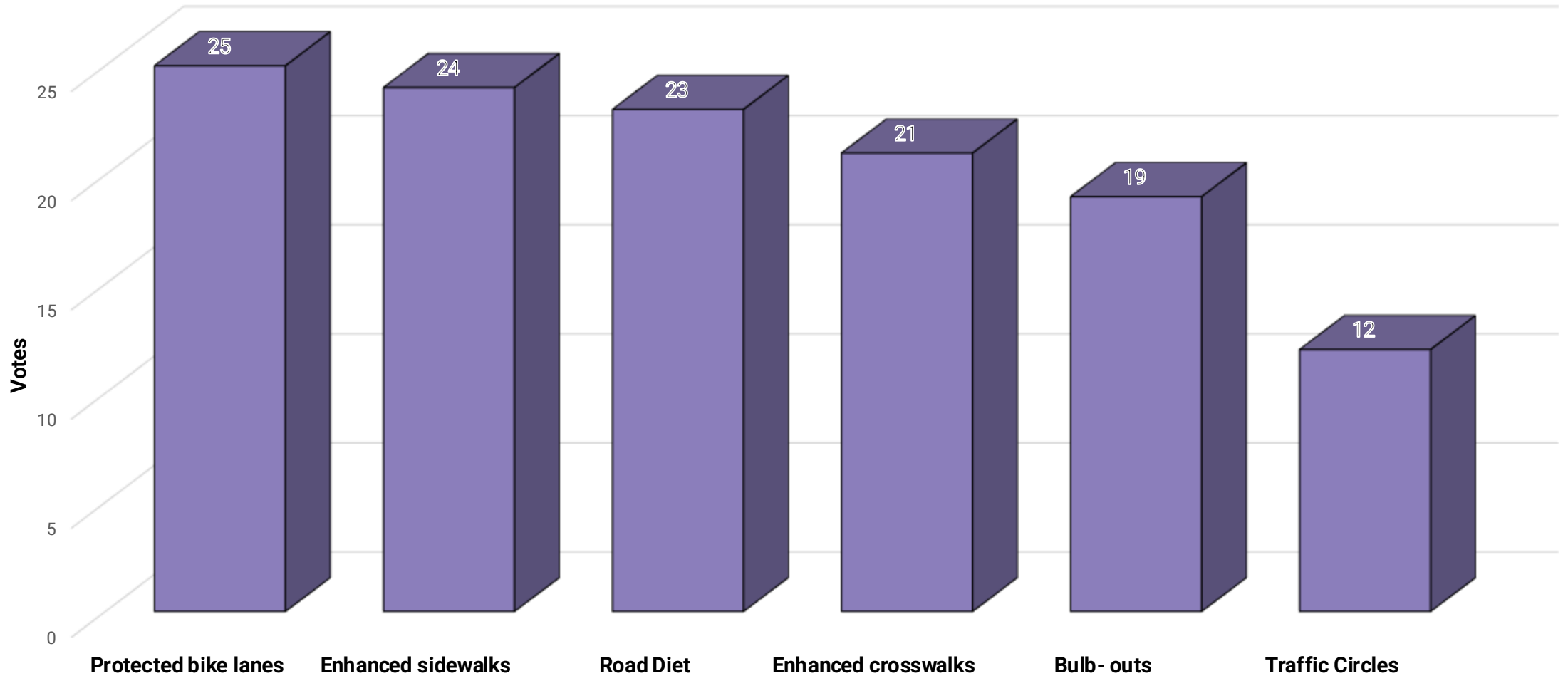
WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE?

¿CUÁLES SON SUS PRINCIPALES PRIORIDADES PARA EL CAMBIO?

Playgrounds for Kids
Recreational Opportunities at Ted C Willis
Shaded Sidewalks
Walkability Dog Park
Community Garden Broadway Park
Neighborhood
Class 4 Bike Lanes + **Plaza Parking**

Community Workshop 1

Which of these approaches to pedestrian and bicycle safety do you like best?



Community Workshop 2

What are your top priorities for streets in Tower District?

Sidewalks

- Parks/public space with native drought tolerant plants, public art
- **Replacement of street trees, more shade**
- **Build missing sidewalks leading to safer streets**

Street Design and Safety

- **No speed bumps but other traffic calming measures for neighborhoods**
- **Well designed bike lanes**
- Bike path along canal
- Speed cameras on street light poles
- More public transit/ light rail/ weekend trolley
- Homeless population causes a perception of not being safe
- More lighting especially for bus stops, more bike cops, security cameras; more security to keep civilians safe

Community Workshop 2

Circulation and Parks Priorities: Olive Avenue Focus Area

Spaces for gatherings

Park green space

Shade in public spaces

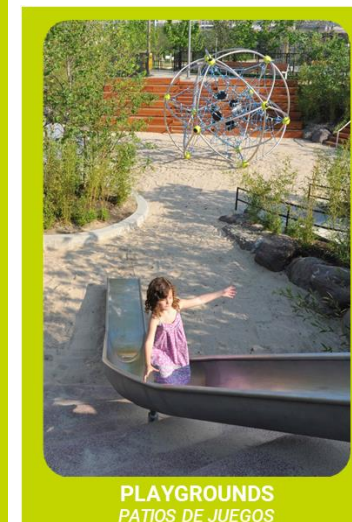
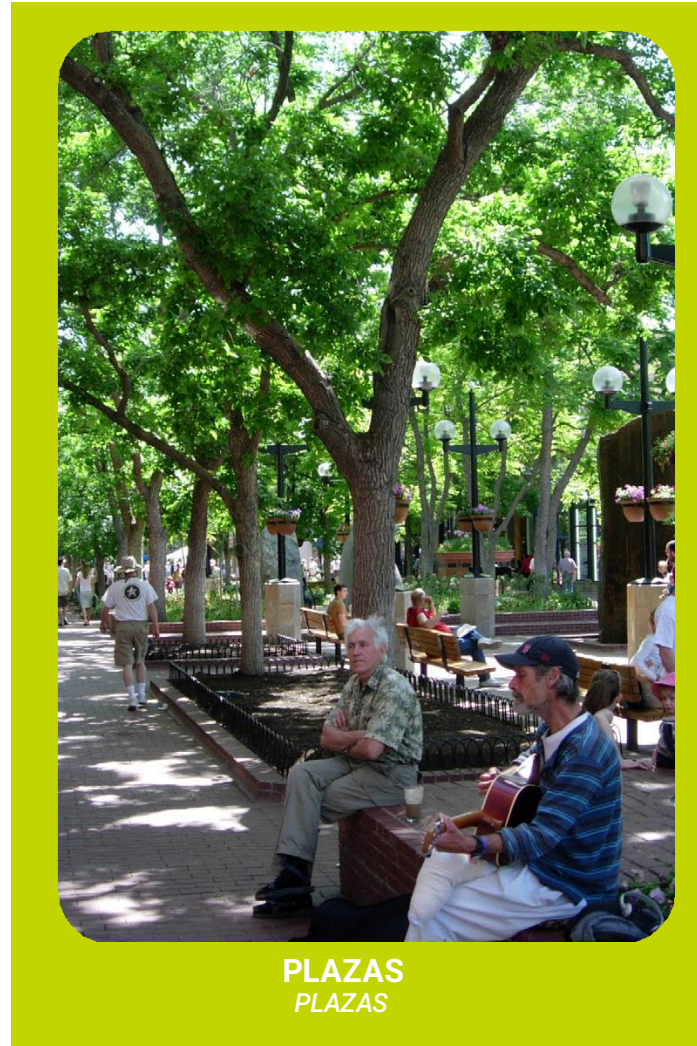
Wider sidewalks on Olive

Curb speeding on residential streets

Outdoor event venue

Remove median on Olive Ave

Parking structure behind Tower Theatre



Community Workshop 2

Circulation and Parks Priorities: Van Ness Village

Well-designed bike lanes

Require trees with new buildings

Community garden

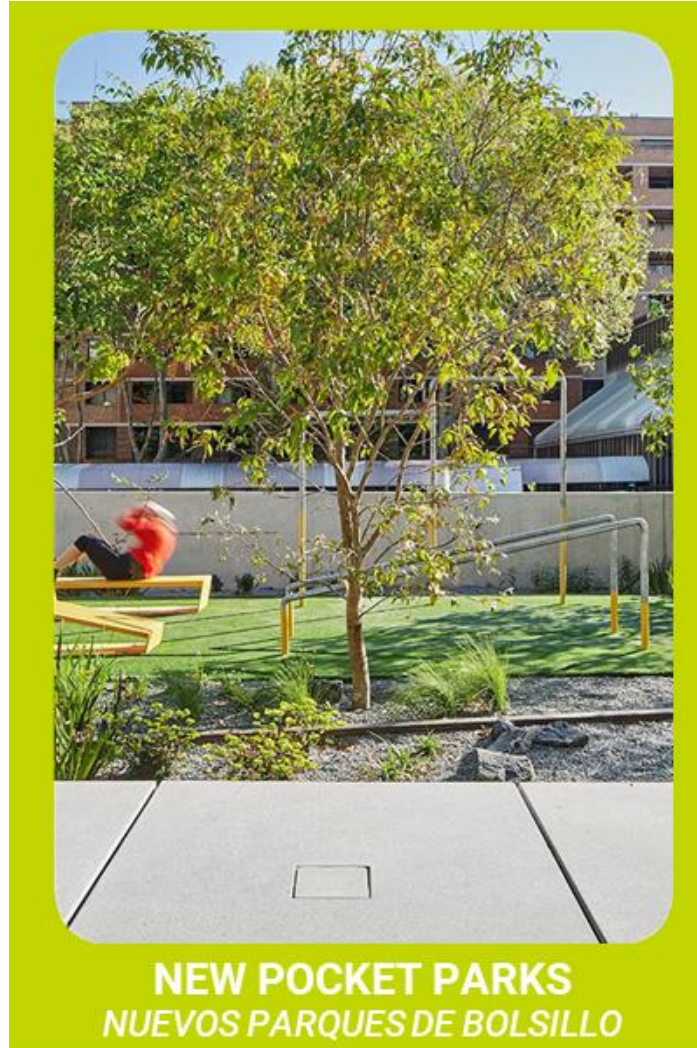
**Parks (one of the dirt parcels),
guerilla garden**

Activating by opening alleys

Access and safety without a car

**Cooperation between city/community on
streetscape (trees, light, bike, parking)**

Clean-up (as a result of night life)



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community Workshop 2

Circulation and Parks Priorities: Belmont Avenue

Sidewalk development; clean, walk friendly, safe, trees/native plants

Traffic flow, street light coordination, more lanes

Green spaces

Community garden on vacant lots

Improve bikability

Ted C. Wills redevelopment (lack of activity)



NEW POCKET PARKS
NUEVOS PARQUES DE BOLSILLO



MULTI-USE PATHS
SENDEROS MULTIUSO



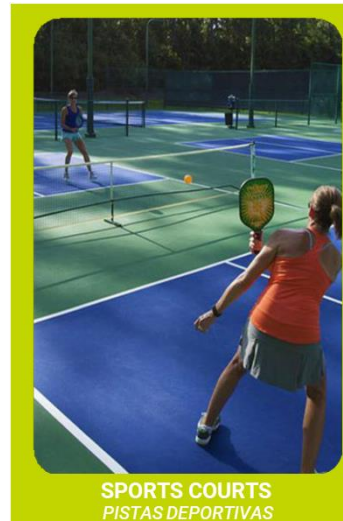
COMMUNITY GARDENS
JARDINES COMUNITARIOS



WIDE SIDEWALKS
ACERAS ANCHAS



PLAYGROUNDS
PATIOS DE JUEGOS



SPORTS COURTS
PISTAS DEPORTIVAS

Community Workshop 2

Circulation and Parks Priorities: Susan B Anthony Neighborhood

Improve walkability

Better maintenance - street trees, sidewalks, lighting, streets, garbage

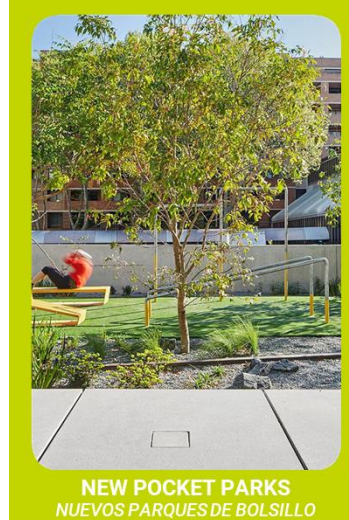
More parks, pocket parks, trails, seating areas

Community gardens

Joint recreation with schools for parks

Clean up abandoned areas

Mitigate unhoused



Community Workshop 2

Circulation and Parks Priorities: Wishon/Maroa Gateway

Improve walkability

Reduce speed to 25 and reduce lanes from 4 to 3 with turn

Sidewalk maintenance, pedestrian friendly

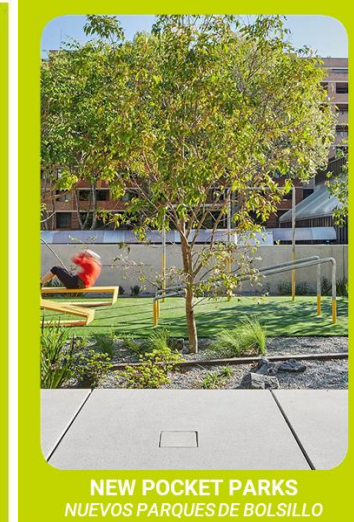
Bike lanes on Maroa and Shields - safer and connectivity to midtown bike trail

Community gardens

"Welcome to Tower" signage/mural

Mitigate unhoused

Public bathrooms and water stations





03

HEALTH +
EQUITY



Health is a state of complete **physical, mental and social well-being** and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Equity is about **ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents** by striving to identify and **eliminate barriers.**

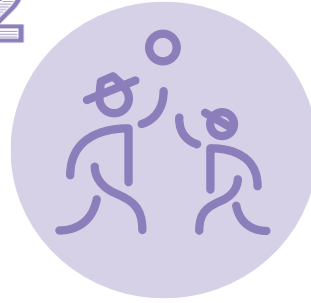
Health and Equity Factors

01



HOUSING BURDEN

02



ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

03



AIR QUALITY

04



ACCESS TO JOBS

05



ACCESS TO
HEALTHY FOOD

06



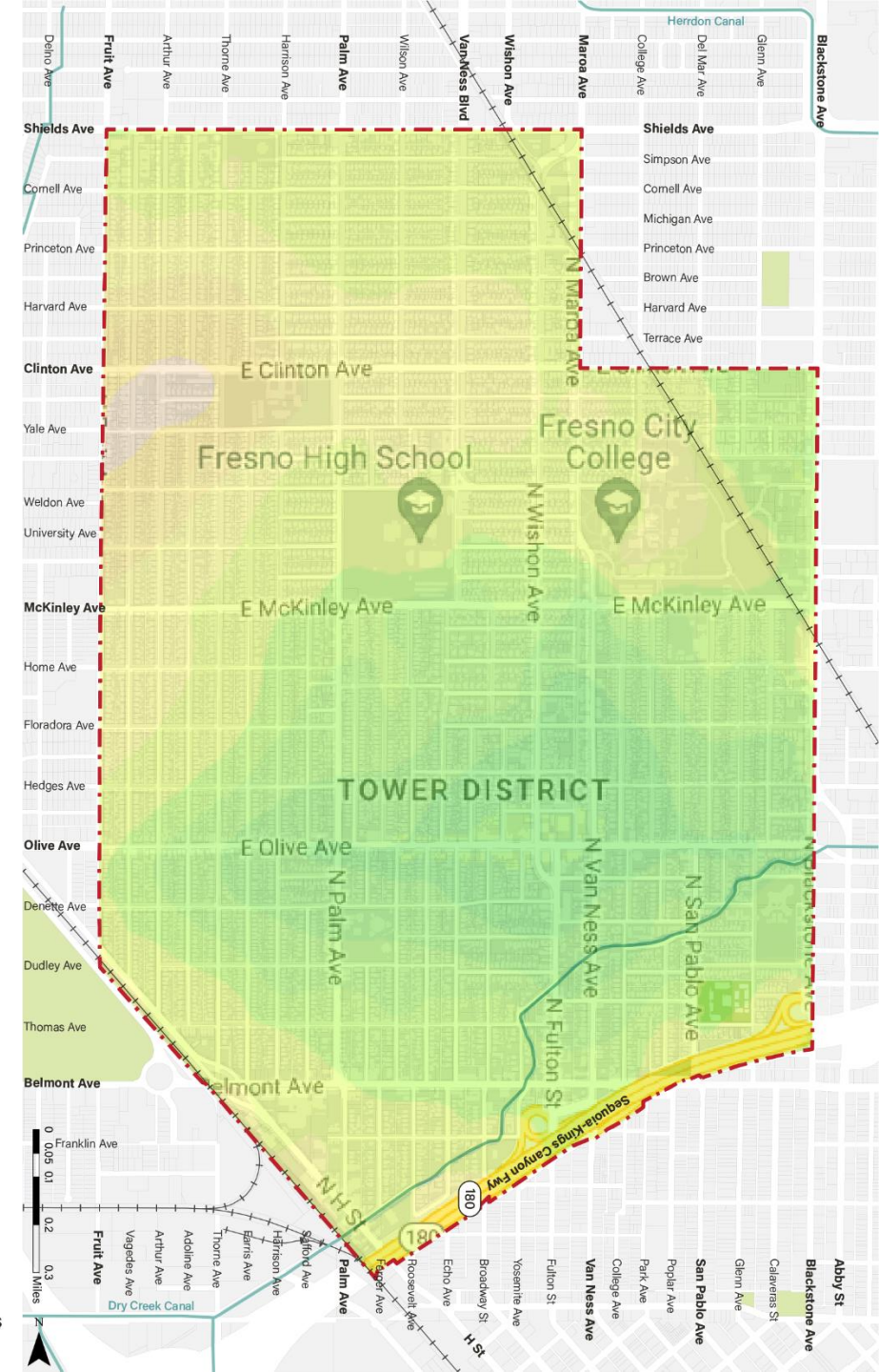
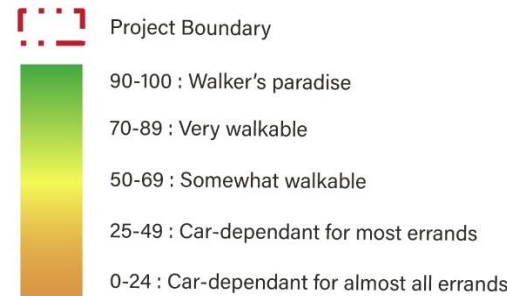
ENVIRONMENTAL
COMFORT

HEALTH + EQUITY

Active Lifestyle

Indicator: Walkability

“Walkscore” has come to be used as a handy measure of walkability. It takes into account both the number of destinations in an area, and the number of available travel routes.



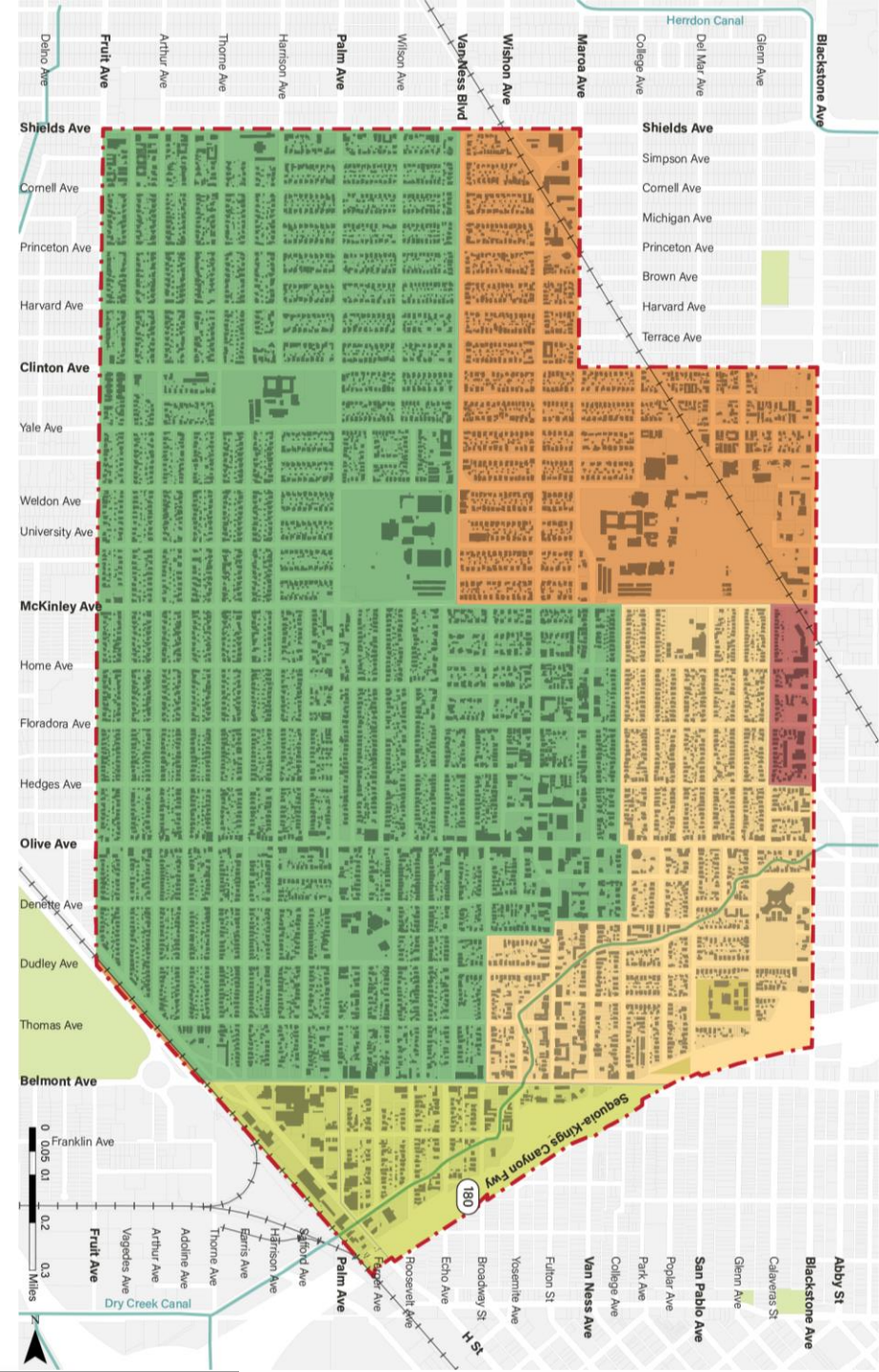
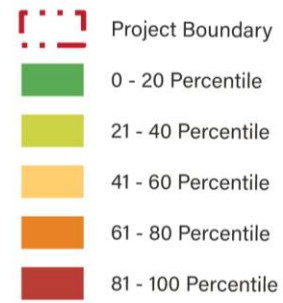
Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

HEALTH + EQUITY

Active Lifestyle + Air Quality

Indicator: Traffic Impact

High traffic (measured as the number of vehicles per hour divided by length of roadways in an area) can bring **air quality, noise, and safety impacts** to local communities.



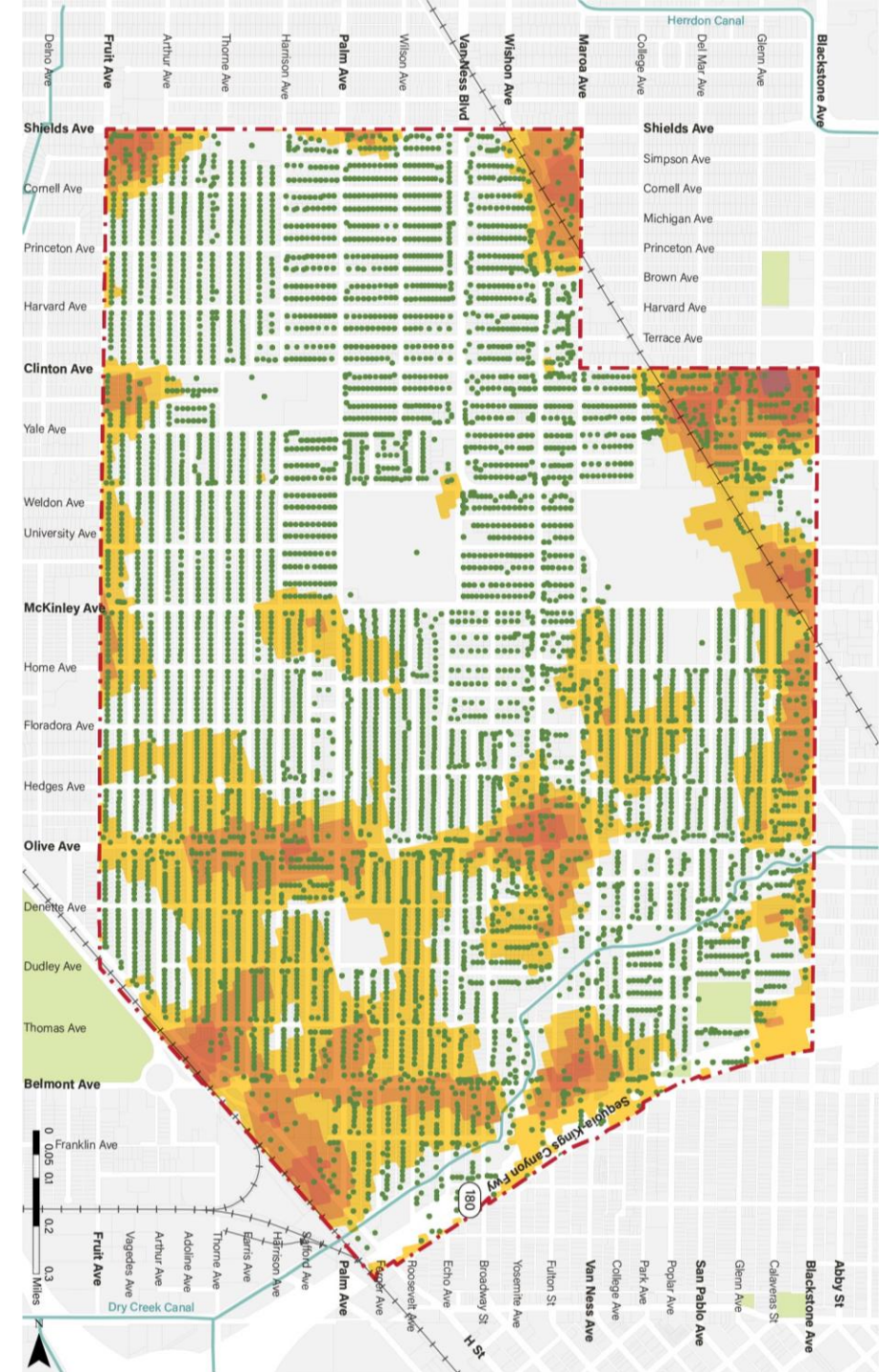
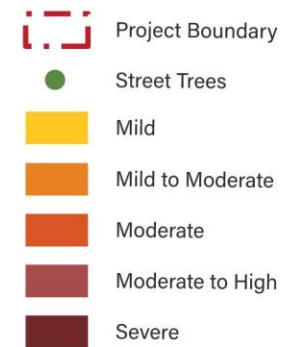
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

HEALTH + EQUITY

Environmental Comfort

Indicator: *Urban Heat Island Severity*

Within cities, areas with more buildings and pavement and fewer trees are especially prone to heat. This is known as the “**urban heat island effect**.”

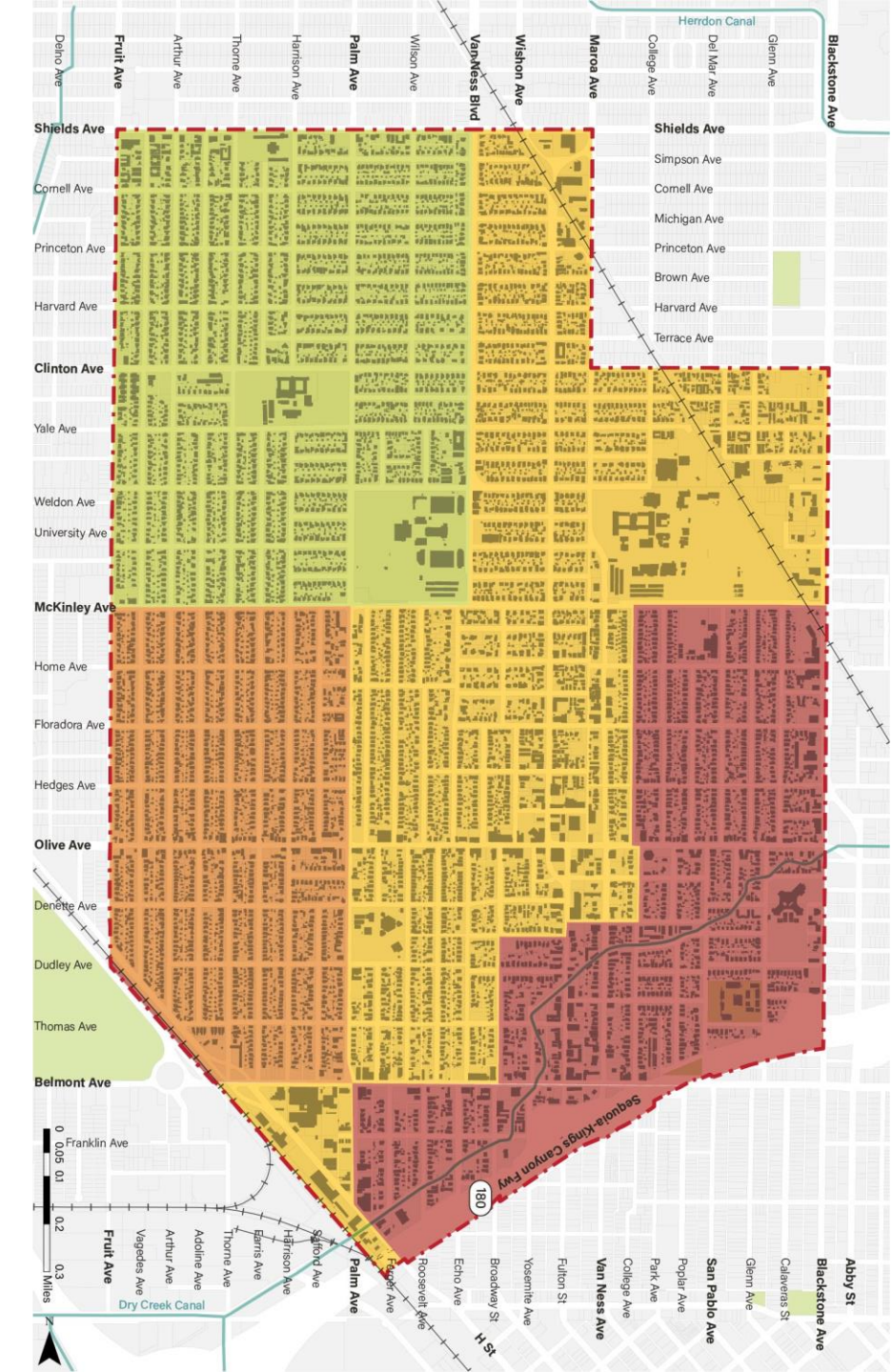
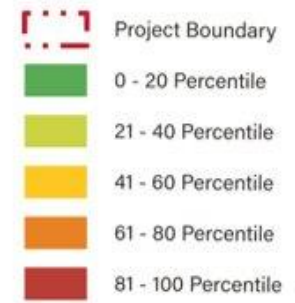


HEALTH + EQUITY

Air Quality

Indicator: Diesel Particulate Matter

- Contains many chemicals that are harmful to health.
- Reach deep into the lung, and can contribute to health problems including eye, throat and nose irritation, heart and lung disease, and lung cancer.
- Children and the elderly are the most sensitive.



Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0

Framing Questions

1. How does the Specific Plan help minimize the impact of poor **air quality** on people? How does the plan address equity in this context?
2. How does the Specific Plan help increase **environmental comfort**? How does it address equity?
3. How does the Specific Plan improve public health by providing avenues for leading an **active lifestyle**? How does it address equity?
4. How does the Specific Plan help increase **public safety**? How does it address equity?
5. How does the Specific Plan improve **access to healthy food**? How does it address equity?
6. How does the Specific Plan reduce **housing burden**? How does it address equity?
7. How does the Specific Plan increase **access to jobs and services**? How does it address equity?



04

EXISTING GOALS + POLICIES



Fresno General Plan: Circulation

- Ensure that design specifications reflect the **Complete Streets** concept.
- Prioritize transportation improvements that are **consistent with the character of surrounding neighborhoods**.
- Evaluate opportunities to reduce right of way and/or **redesign streets to support non-automobile travel modes**.
- **Prioritize bikeways** that link separated sections of the system or that are likely to serve the highest concentration of existing or potential cyclists.
- Coordinate the planning, design, and construction of the roadway network with transit operators to facilitate efficient direct **transit routing**.
- Establish **parking benefit districts** to fund consolidated public parking if supported by local businesses.



FRESNO General Plan

Adopted:
December 18, 2014

Development and Resource
Management Department

City of
FRESNO

Tower District Specific Plan: Circulation

Goal III: Respect and further enhance historic character of the Tower District as a place not dominated by the automobile.

Objective II: Make commercial areas a convenient, safe focal point for neighborhood activities and public life

Policy 1: Ensure full access for mobility impaired persons in all parts of the Tower District, and especially in areas which are centers of public and community life.

Policy 3: Provide streetscape elements, public plazas, and open space to engender public activities and functions.

Tower District Specific Plan: Circulation

Goal III: Respect and further enhance historic character of the Tower District as a place not dominated by the automobile.

Objective III: Develop and adopt a parking plan for the Tower District based on pedestrian-oriented standards for commercial and public uses.

Policy 1: Retain on-street parking in the Tower District

Policy 2: Establish a parking district(s) to provide off-site parking for commercial development.

Policy 3: Eliminate and prevent on-site surface parking which fronts major streets, and develop urban, in contrast to suburban, standards for provision of on-site parking.

Policy 4: Discourage spillover parking from institutions into residential neighborhoods.

Objective IV: Encourage new development of public transportation alternatives for moving people to/from and within the Tower District.

Tower District Specific Plan: Circulation

Goal V: Maintain and improve Tower District public infrastructure consistent with levels of public investment in newer parts of the City.

Objective I: Repair, resurface and maintain public streets and alleys.

Policy 1: Establish an improvements and maintenance program and budget for the Tower District.

Policy 2: Prioritize improvements to address the most neglected areas of the Tower District for initial projects.

Objective II: Repair, maintain and enhance public areas within street rights-of-way, including sidewalks, tree lawns and streetlights.

Policy 1: Conserve mature street trees, maintain tree lawns, and retain and refurbish existing streetlights through a replacement and retrofit program.

Policy 2: Maintain and improve alleys to provide access to garages, rear yards and trash collection containers.

Tower District Specific Plan: Circulation

Goal V: Maintain and improve Tower District public infrastructure consistent with levels of public investment in newer parts of the City.

Objective III: Initiate projects which help to mitigate adverse impacts resulting from regional circulation improvements.

Policy 1: Develop landscape improvement programs for streets to prevent adverse impacts on adjacent residential properties and neighborhoods.

Policy 2: Where possible and desirable, develop public improvement projects which clearly separate and "buffer" residential neighborhoods from strip commercial uses.

Tower District Specific Plan: Circulation

Roadway Guidelines

- Existing streets should NOT be widened
- New streets should be made as narrow as possible.
- Existing street grid network should be maintained and enhanced whenever possible.
- On-street parking should exist on all streets except where bus stops or driveways are necessary.

Sidewalk Guidelines

- All streets of the Tower District should have sidewalks on both sides, without exception.
- Historic street features (streetlights, street trees, etc.) should be maintained and protected.

Commercial / Mixed-Use Areas

- Sidewalks should have minimum 10 feet of width
- Tree wells are appropriate, but planting strips between sidewalk and buildings are inappropriate.
- Should consist of three easily defined zones:
 - Outer curbside furniture zone
 - Clear central walk zone
 - Inner building frontage furniture zone
- Outdoor dining areas enabled with encroachment permit

Residential Areas

- Sidewalks should be minimum 4 feet wide.
- Planting strips 3 to 5 feet wide are appropriate between sidewalk and curb of the street and should preserve existing tree lawns.